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FRIDAY, JANUARY 10, 1896.

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ALASKA AS IT WAS AND IS, 1865-1895. *

IN 1864 the apparent hopelessness of the attempts to establish a workable trans-Atlantic telegraph cable led those interested in telegraphic communication with Europe to consider other means of attaining that end. It was thought that a short cable across Bering Strait might be made to work, and no doubt was entertained of the possibility of maintaining the enormously extended land lines which should connect the ends of this cable with the systems already in operation in Europe and the United States. A company was formed for this purpose, and an expedition to undertake the explorations necessary to determine the route was organized. The coöperation of the Russian and American governments was secured, and the necessary funds subscribed. Searching for properly qualified explorers, the promoters of the enterprise consulted the Smithsonian Institution and were brought into communication with Robert Kennicott, of Chicago, a young and enthusiastic naturalist, who had already made some remarkable journeys in the Hudson Bay Territories in the interest of science. His explorations had taken him to the most remote of the Hudson Bay posts—Fort Yukon on the river of the same name—regardless of every kind of hardship,

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* The annual presidential address, delivered before the Philosophical Society of Washington, December 6, 1895, by W. H. Dall.